



Metropolitan Planning Organization  
for the Miami Urbanized Area

# Transportation Voice

*The MPO Office*

*...where transportation comes to life!*

Winter 2006

## Include Your Idea in the Transportation Plan

**D**o you have a transportation idea that will help reduce traffic congestion in Miami-Dade County? The Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the agency responsible for transportation planning in Miami-Dade County, offers a way for citizen's transportation ideas to be heard. There are two ways citizens can have ideas considered by their MPO.

"Each year, the MPO staff has a 'Call for Transportation Ideas' to be included in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). This gives the citizens a chance to call, fax, email, mail, or even walk-in their transportation ideas to the MPO staff," according to Oscar Camejo, MPO Project Manager (refer to page 4 to fill out a form with your ideas to alleviate traffic congestion).

Ideas submitted will be considered by the UPWP Committee, which is made up of staff representing the transportation agencies in Dade County.

Selected ideas are placed into the UPWP and considered by the MPO Governing Board for approval. Once the MPO Board approves

the UPWP, all studies within the document are completed by MPO Staff.

Another way a citizen can contribute is by taking their ideas to one or all of the following citizen committees:

*Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)* - ensures that proposed transportation projects are responsive to the community's needs and goals.



*Citizens offer transportation ideas*

*Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)* - promotes bicycling and walking as commuter alternatives to driving, and encourages their use.

*Transportation Aesthetics Review Committee (TARC)* - advises on aesthetic aspects of major

transportation projects.

*Freight Transportation Advisory Committee (FTAC)* - promotes and advances the freight and goods movement throughout the County.

These citizen committees can make recommendations to the MPO Governing Board, who then can take the idea under consideration and direct MPO staff to conduct a study.

## Did you know?

**T**he South Florida Vanpool Program (SFVP) was recognized by the Florida Department of Transportation as an exemplary project.

Jesus Guerra, MPO Transportation Systems Manager, has been chosen for the second consecutive year as the winner of the 2005 Travel Choices Leadership Award for his leadership in developing and managing the SFVP.



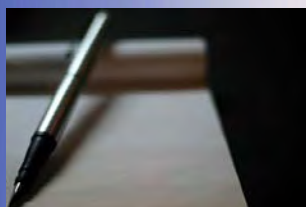
*Jesus Guerra*

"This is a great reflection on the MPO and the dedicated staff we have working for the citizens of Miami-Dade County. We are always thinking of ways to contribute in the advancement of public transportation services," stated Jose-Luis Mesa, MPO Director.

A vanpool is a group of four to fifteen commuters who choose to commute together to work in a well-equipped van supplied by SFVP. Currently, there are 133 active vanpool groups traveling within Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties.

*If you would like more information on the Vanpool Program please call 1-800-234-RIDE (7433) or visit [www.1800234RIDE.com](http://www.1800234RIDE.com)*

**Refer to page 4 for the  
UPWP form to submit your  
transportation ideas...**



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## Special Lanes for Buses Only

The MPO recently completed a study that would allow transit users to enjoy freedom from traffic congestion by riding on separate lanes and shoulders on major highways. In October 2005, the project entitled "Special Use Lanes II Study" evaluated freeways and major roadways that have the potential to accommodate some type of special use lane.

Criteria for using the shoulders along the expressways:

- ♦ Paved shoulders no less than 10-ft. wide;
- ♦ Only authorized vehicles (emergency vehicles and MDT buses) are allowed to use the shoulders;
- ♦ Bus drivers will change to the shoulders when average speed is 25 mph or less on the regular traffic lanes;

- ♦ The maximum speed in the shoulders by authorized vehicles is 35 mph; and
- ♦ Bus drivers operating on the shoulder must yield to merging and exiting traffic, and to disabled vehicles or other obstacles on the shoulders.

The Turnpike, State Roads 836, 874, and 878 have been chosen for the implementation of the first phase of this pilot project. Using shoulders along expressways is beneficial for

bus riders as well as automobile drivers.

The ability to rely on bus service that is not held back by automobile traffic will increase the efficiency of the County's transportation system. At the same time, this will ease commuter traffic during peak congestion times. Services are expected to begin in the summer of 2006.

## A Watery Venue for Public Transportation

The MPO is studying the use of waterways as a venue for transportation to alleviate congestion and offer a more innovative alternative to the current public transportation system.

The MPO initiated the "Development of a Service Plan for Waterborne Transit Services in Miami-Dade County" to develop a water transit service plan that would offer alternatives to local commuters, and secondarily provide an attractive form of transportation for tourists and visitors.

Water-based travel would add mobility options and at the same time allow commuters to enjoy scenic routes of Miami's waterways.

Frank Baron, Transportation Systems Manager for the Miami-Dade MPO stated,

"This could end up being a really interesting travel mode that would provide travelers with an alternative to commuting on our increasingly congested streets and highways."

The study was conducted by examining waterways that could provide adequate water travel and service that is competitive with automobile travel.

Water travel does indeed provide an innovative outlook on the future of transportation, but it is important that this type of service is reliable and operational for all residents and visitors.

A pilot project has been proposed to connect strategic locations around Biscayne Bay. Federal funds will be requested for this pilot program.



95 Express Bus at the Golden Glades

## From an Idea to Reality...



### Trolley Bus, City of Coral Gables

The MPO provided funding to the City of Coral Gables through the Municipal Grant Program to fund the study on integrating a Trolley system for local transportation. It allows pedestrians to move freely and easily through the commercial districts, free of charge including Miracle Mile and Merrick Park.

### South Florida Vanpool Program

Since 1998, the MPO provides management and funding for the program. With 133 vans, residents can share a ride to work. Vanpoolers are reducing wear and tear on their personal automobiles and are saving money on gas, tolls, and vehicle maintenance.



### Biscayne Trail

The Biscayne Trail is being developed by the Miami-Dade Parks and Recreation Department to connect Old Cutler Road to Homestead Bayfront Park and Biscayne National Park. The Biscayne Trail is an element of the South Dade Greenway Network and is included in the MPO's Bicycle Facilities Plan.

### Hialeah Transit System (HTS)

The MPO has provided the City of Hialeah funding for two studies which helped initiate the HTS in 2002 and evaluate the operations for potential improvements. It is comprised of two routes (Flamingo & Marlin) served by ten buses.



### South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (Tri-Rail)

Extending 72 miles from Miami to North of West Palm Beach, Tri-Rail offers transportation to Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. It runs mainly alongside I-95.



## Transportation Roads: Over and Under

Miami-Dade County's busiest intersections are now under consideration for an innovation that can help commuters get to and from work faster.

The MPO's "Grade Separation Study" examined intersections with high congestion that could benefit from the construction of a "continuous flow intersection." Grade separation allows for traffic to move at higher speeds, withstanding high capacity. It also reduces the possibility for automobile accidents on busy intersections.

The study was evaluated on a two Tier evaluation basis. Tier 1 evaluated intersections based on the following criteria:

- ♦ Average Number of Crashes and Injuries;
- ♦ Total Traffic Volume;

- ♦ Right-of-Way;
- ♦ Impact on Local Streets; and
- ♦ Land Use Impacts.

Tier 2 evaluated intersections that showed "fatal-flaws" in the Tier 1 evaluation. Recommended intersections were:

- ♦ SW 107<sup>th</sup> Avenue and SW 8<sup>th</sup> Street
- ♦ SW 87<sup>th</sup> Avenue and SW 8<sup>th</sup> Street
- ♦ SW 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and South Dixie Highway
- ♦ North Kendall Drive and SW 127<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- ♦ NW 36<sup>th</sup> Street and NW 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue

The project proposed for NW 36<sup>th</sup> Street is in the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the others were recently incorporated as well. Also, the MPO Governing Board has recommended that SW 152<sup>nd</sup> Street have an elevated structure for left turn movements onto the Turnpike.

## One Less Stop for Bus Users

Drivers in Miami-Dade County would like to avoid congested streets and enjoy a faster commute. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) can achieve this by providing service similar to light rail or rapid transit systems using existing streets, but at a cheaper cost. BRT is a high-quality mode of transit that offers faster travel choices for bus riders. Currently, the South-Miami Dade Busway running parallel to US-1 already provides a successful form of BRT.

The "BRT Opportunities Study" identified roadways in Miami-Dade County where low-cost BRT treatments can give Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) buses an ad-

vantage by providing new and enhanced service. These include Biscayne Blvd., Flagler Street, and Kendall Drive. The BRT corridor selection process involved the following:

- ♦ Identify a list of potential candidate BRT corridors;
- ♦ Refine and evaluate candidate BRT corridors; and
- ♦ Recommend candidate corridors for detailed analysis.

"The Los Angeles Metro Rapid System has fostered great satisfaction from users and we anticipate that innovations in Miami-

Dade County will make residents just as proud of our transit system," states Wilson Fernandez, MPO Transportation Systems Manager. For all proposed BRT corridors, please visit the MPO website at [www.miamidade.gov/mpo](http://www.miamidade.gov/mpo).



Busway Stop in Amsterdam, Holland



*Have an  
innovative  
transportation  
idea you would  
like to share  
with the MPO?  
Let us know...  
It could  
become a  
study in the  
UPWP!*

## Call for Transportation Ideas

(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



### Metropolitan Planning Organization Governing Board

*Planning  
the Future of  
Transportation!*

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##### MPO Secretariat

Jose-Luis Mesa, Ph.D.



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